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ABSTRACT

This report describes a preliminary evaluation in September 1979 of 12 program topics and their stated objectives for an instructional television series, the Secondary School Health Project, which addresses issues relevant to the personal and social growth of adolescents. The study addressed the following questions: (1) How can the series' topics best be presented to ensure its utilization? (2) What do teachers and/or other professionals see as the potential advantages and/or disadvantages of using this series with adolescents? and (3) What types of materials will be most useful for inclusion in the discussion leader's guide? A description of the field study design covers the data collection instruments, procedures (focused group interviews and take-home questionnaires), the sample of 88 teachers and other professionals in 8 midwestern communities, and the study limitations. Specific results are discussed for each of the 12 topics: self concept, changing relationships within the family, feelings, friendship, peer-group membership, loving, thinking, career aspirations, coping with stress, conflict resolution, aloneness, and prejudice and discrimination. Advantages and disadvantages of using the series are also addressed. Appendices include an analysis of topic relevance as perceived by teachers and both the discussion and the take-home questionnaires. (LMM)

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Research Report 70

Secondary Health Project: Concepts Review

January, 1980

Agency for Instructional Television
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Bloomington, Indiana 47402

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Preface

This investigation deals with the initial report of the Secondary Health Project's Design Team. The data were gathered to provide the insights and perspectives of practicing teachers and other professionals who are expected to be using the materials developed by this project. The information gathered, and now being reported in this form, was summarized and reported orally to project designers and staff within a week after its collection. These data--and data provided by consortium members, project staff and consultants--all contributed to revisions in the project's design paper.

The program development process continues to use these data to establish story formats and refine program outcomes. In addition, data were gathered and provided to guide writers on aspects of teacher and discussion leader material that might accompany the programs. Other information on the utilization of television in secondary schools was provided directly to those involved in the utilization and facilitation aspects of the Secondary School Television Project.

While this research has found use in the Secondary Health Project, it has utility beyond the Project. The issues and themes included in this investigation are important in the personal and social growth of adolescents. This report covers the current practices of teachers who teach these issues and their perceptions of how they and their students wish to deal with these issues. These perspectives may be useful to those in health education and in television.

We want to express our appreciation to the educators who participated in this study for their willingness to discuss the project's themes and their forthrightness in our discussions.

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Introduction

The Secondary School Health Project is a series of twelve programs being developed by the Agency for Instructional Television in conjunction with a consortium of state and provincial educational agencies with additional private support. The project is scheduled to begin use in the fall of 1980.

The Secondary School Health Project is designed to promote the personal and social growth of students in grades nine through twelve. Planning for the series began in 1977; the prospectus was published in October, 1978. The AIT staff and representatives of the consortium more sharply defined the goals of the series at a meeting in spring, 1979. The project design team then developed twelve specific program topics, each believed to be relevant to the personal and social growth of the adolescent.

Upon release of the design team report, project staff recognized a need for preliminary evaluation of the twelve topics and their stated objectives. Since interests and concerns of students themselves had been previously surveyed in Indiana and Massachusetts, this phase of the evaluation was conducted with a sample of secondary school teachers and other professionals likely to use the series. Since use may vary from state to state or province to province, consortium representatives in each site visited were asked to select those persons in their jurisdictions that they believed would use the programs.

A variety of needs and questions were initially formulated by the project staff and consultants, and then consolidated into three primary issues:

1. To insure its utilization, how can the series topics best be presented?

2. What do teachers and/or other professionals see as the potential advantages and/or disadvantages of using this series with adolescents?

3. What types of materials will be most useful for inclusion in the discussion leader's guide?

The evaluation staff then determined the methodological approach for the field study. Given a need for both quick response and rich qualitative data, two complimentary approaches were used: focused group interviews covering up to six of the project themes, and a take-home questionnaire covering the remaining six. Each person included in the evaluation participated in a group session and received a questionnaire.

Field Study Design

Development of Data Collection Instruments

Evaluators selected two modes of collection--group discussion and take-home questionnaires--that would provide complimentary data. Following is a breakdown of the specific issues addressed in each.

Panel Discussion *	Questionnaire *
1. In a preliminary discussion*, panel members were asked to share what kinds of mental health related topics they were already dealing with in their classrooms, how these issues were approached, and an estimation of how much class time was being spent on mental health related topics.	1. The honorarium* included background informations on teaching experience, area of speciality, and demographics.
2. Questions for each topic centered on the following issues: - were they already dealing with the topic, and if so, how? - how was interest in the topic most likely to be expressed? - did they see any potential problems in dealing with the topic either for themselves, students or the school administration? - what aspect of the topic would they hope to see on the screen in order to best serve the needs of their students? - what would be typical situations relevant to this age group (to aid in storyline ideas)? - were the expected outcomes realistic?	2. Questions on the remaining six topics not covered in the discussion centered on the following issues: - was the topic on the minds of students? how was interest in the topic most likely to be expressed? - how comfortable was the topic for both teachers and students? - was the topic relevant to students' needs?
3. Teachers were asked for their greatest concern for the series and the greatest potential advantage of the series.	3. Teachers were asked for their greatest concern for the series and the greatest potential advantage of the series.

* See appendix -- for copies of the preliminary discussion form, the topic discussion form, and the honorarium and questionnaire form.

Evaluators recognized that time restrictions might prevent the discussion of all six topics with one group, and absolutely precluded the discussion of all twelve. To give topics a greater chance of equal coverage in group discussions, a table of random numbers was used to determine three pairs of order for presenting the 12 topics. In each ordering the first six topics were delegated to discussion, with the second six presented on the take-home questionnaire. Using this method each ordered pair of topics was covered by 4 panels: 2 in discussion and 2 on the questionnaire.

Procedures for Data Collection

Each meeting began with a brief get-acquainted period that included background information the Secondary School Health Project and an explanation of the purpose of the meeting. The evaluator then conducted a preliminary discussion to determine what topics related to personal and social growth are already being dealt with in the classroom. Following that discussion, a program from *Self-Incorporated*, ("No Trespassing,") was shown to illustrate the format proposed for the Secondary Health series.

The evaluator then led a discussion of as many of the six topics as could be covered in the remaining time. Before adjourning, participants were given a packet containing the questionnaire and honorarium form.

Sample

The 12 Secondary School Health Project topics were evaluated by 88 teachers and other professionals in 8 Midwestern communities from September 13 through September 21, 1979. Participants were selected by a local consortium contact, as representative of the people from their communities who would be most inclined to use the health series. Teachers constituted the great majority of the panel and represented the following curriculum

areas: Health/Physical Education (n=31), Health (n=16), Home Economics (n=14), Media/Communication (n=5), Psychology (n=4), Modern Family Living (n=2) and Physical Education (n=2). Counselors (n=7) accounted for the majority of the non-teacher group with nurses (n=6) and one pupil services administrator rounding off the sample.

Although the study was limited to Midwestern communities, data came from a range of urban, suburban, small town, and rural school settings. Of the 88 participants, the 77 that returned the questionnaires and accompanying demographic information, assigned their school settings as follows:

Urban	36
Suburban	8
Small Town	29
Rural	2

Among the same 77 panelists, the median for years of teaching experience was between 11 and 12 years.

Limitations of the Study

The conditions under which a field study is carried out can introduce confounding variables which may influence the results. In this field study design there are some circumstances that may have affected the outcomes reported here and that should be considered. To the extent these conditions were recognized, they are described below:

1. Because of deadlines, there were limitations on travel distance. Therefore, while the sample population included a range of urban, suburban, and rural settings, all were in the Midwest.

2. The panel members were purposively not randomly selected, but represented the consortium representative's assessment of the teachers and other professionals most likely to use the series in that area.

3. In order to collect data to meet the concerns of all project staff, the meeting was scheduled for 2-1/2 hours--a very long time to maintain attention and concentration. Also, in many sites, the evaluators led two panel sessions with only a short break between.

Discussion of Results

As previously noted, data were collected to respond to a variety of questions and concerns. The results are divided into three major areas: preliminary discussion, discussion and questionnaire data pertaining to topics, and a summary of advantage and disadvantages of using the project.

Preliminary Discussion

Present use of personal and social growth issues included twenty-eight different topics. The five most frequently mentioned were: human sexuality; relationships with family; dating and peers; the use and/or abuse of alcohol and drugs; self-concept (worth and awareness); and personality development. Other, less frequently mentioned subjects included: peer problems and pressures, family life and marriage, alternative life style, vocational and career development, divorce, and coping with stress.

Films, filmstrips and other visuals were the most frequently reported media used to introduce these topics in the classroom. Textbooks and resource persons were also used by members of five panels as a means of approaching personal and social growth topics with their class. Other methods of introduction less frequently mentioned included non-text books, commercial television programs, and newspapers and magazines. Members of six panels indicated that the personal and social growth topics covered in class were typically part of a curriculum unit while members of two panels said these topics were more often introduced in private conversation with individual

students.

The amount of time teachers and other professionals spent on personal and social growth topics ranged from two weeks per year to an entire school year, with the counselors and school nurses spending a greater percentage of time than did teachers. When asked under what circumstances they would spend more time on personal and social growth issues, five groups indicated they would to so if "good" materials and resources were available. The next most frequent response to this question was given by three groups who would increase time spent on these issues only if students made a request to do so.

Program Topics: Discussion and Questionnaire Data

Evaluator's observations and review of the data show that teachers and other professionals participating in group discussion were overwhelmingly receptive to the general direction of the series. They voiced a need for appealing, effective materials dealing with the personal and social growth of adolescents. The proposed program topics and their stated outcomes did not go unchallenged, however later, in this section topics will be reviewed individually, citing both discussion and questionnaire data and noting apparent relationships between the two. Criticisms or comments about the entire set to topics and/or outcomes will also be noted.

There was consensus across all panels regarding listing desirable outcomes under the heading: "As a result of this program the adolescent viewer will:" They objected to the implication that student behavior will change as a result of viewing one program. They did not object, however, to making the statement that "the adolescent viewer will begin to"... "or the adolescent viewer may...." There was a strong recommendation that the wording of this column be changed.

Another general concern expressed about four of the program topics, was the basic need for student/teacher rapport. In its absence, panel members did not believe students and teachers could comfortably and confidently approach the specific topics of "self concept," "feelings," "loving," and "coping with stress." Respondents doubted, also, the ability of some teachers to deal effectively with these four issues, and suggested some form of teacher training.

An additional suggestion for reducing the reluctance of teachers and students to deal with certain program topics, was to pose discussion questions in the third person.

For all topics, panelists were asked if there were ways of presenting the subject that would be unacceptable to teachers and/or to students. While some responses were specific to a concept, many reappeared across all concepts. For the teacher aspect of this question the general concerns were that topics be approached in a "positive" manner and that presentations be realistic. Panelists suggested students would object to programs trying to "teach and preach," and would pick up on anything that might date the program, including clothing, slang, cars and music. They also suggested that students are quick to point out anything they perceive to be phoney or unrealistic.

When evaluating the outcome statements for each topic, several panels recommended that for Self Concept, Coping With Stress, Prejudice and Discrimination, and Aloneness, an additional desirable outcome should be that students discuss the universal nature of problems associated with these topics. That is, that students find out that everyone experiences stress, etc.

Self Concept

The topic of "Self Concept" emerged as one teachers and other panelists believe to be essential to the needs of adolescents. In both questionnaire and discussion data they indicated that they are already approaching this issue in a variety of ways -- classroom lessons, discussions, and often in one-to-one counselling with individual students.

There was some disagreement concerning how comfortable students would be if a program based upon this topic were presented in the classroom. In discussions, 12 of 31 panelists had no reservations, believing students would tune into the program particularly if they thought it would be self-improving. However, an equal number of panelists believed students would be hesitant to talk about themselves and that such self-disclosure would require a trusting relationship between teacher and students. While the median scores of those responding to this issue on the questionnaire indicated they would be comfortable presenting the topic, they too believe students may be somewhat uncomfortable dealing with this issue in classroom settings.

Panelists discussed a variety of concerns that are on students' minds regarding self-concept. Many of these student concerns were reflections of adolescents linking their self-concept to external characteristics: (e.g. lack of money, weight problems, clothes, acne, not having the nicest home, not having a car, etc.) Lack of success in school and the distinction between being vocationally-oriented versus college-bound were also mentioned.

The aspects of self-concept that panelists would prefer seeing in a program clustered in three major areas: illustrating the development of self-concept; illuminating the internal feelings associated with good or

poor self-concept, and using a peer problem to exemplify the universality of the feeling of rejection adolescents associated with a lowered self-esteem. A variety of illustrations were suggested for each of these approaches. The group favoring development approach suggested the program show how individuals are shaped by those around them and how some parts of the individual can be changed while other parts cannot. Those proposing a focus on the feelings associated with self-concept suggested a program about how one can improve his or her self-concept by participating in activities, helping others, getting a job, etc. The third group would relate self-concept to a peer problem, illustrating that the feeling of defeat is universal, and that apparent differences in self-concept are a reflection of how each person deals with defeat.

When discussing the stated outcomes for the self-concept program, two panels questioned the utility of the statement: "... the adolescents will form accurate pictures of themselves by talking to others." Panelists feared this would instead lead students to an "inaccurate" picture of themselves. They suggested students need to be made aware of the potential limitations of the perceptions of "others."

Changing Relationships Within the Family

There were conflicting data on the topic of "Changing Relationships within the Family." Six groups (N=51) discussed this issue. All believed students could be willing to discuss the topic in class and overall they did not anticipate any problems. Nevertheless, two urban groups believed the topic would be unacceptable to certain people: one group isolated school administrators; the other parents. This suggests that to insure the acceptability of this concept, the approach should reflect the concerns of adults which may influence the eventual use of the program.

Discussion groups perceived changing relationships in the family as an important topic in the lives of adolescents; they generated a list of fourteen student concerns in this area. The three most frequently mentioned topics were: divorce and its associated problems or advantages; a third generation coming into the household be it a grandparent or child; and the changes associated with the increased responsibilities during adolescence: e.g., a job, taking care of younger siblings. Other topics mentioned included death, premarital pregnancy, leaving home, and physical or emotional abuse.

In contrast to the multitude of concerns noted in group discussion, those who evaluated this topic on the questionnaire form rated it moderately important to the needs of students. However, 28 of these 33 respondents did indicate that this topic is on the minds of their students and is one they now deal with in classroom lessons and during private counselling with students. There appears to be an inconsistancy between their assessment of student needs and what is actually taking place in the classrooms.

However, when considering the data from both the panel discussion and questionnaire the results suggest that the issue of changing relationships in the family is important to the needs of students.

No single aspect of the topic emerged as being the essential one to present in the program. Divorce and the general idea of "changing roles" were cited as topics both teachers and students would want to see presented. This did not, however, represent a consensus of panels.

Several unacceptable approaches to the topic of changing relationships in the family were discussed. These were noted in three of the six panels and again do not represent a consensus. Homosexuality, and any "living together" situation, were mentioned as unacceptable to teachers; homosexuality and incest were mentioned as being unacceptable to students. Three of the six panels could think of no approach that would be unacceptable.

In discussing the stated outcomes, all groups generally disliked the term "caregiver" — they found the term "sterile" and "cold" -- with the majority of panelists preferring the term "family" or "parent/guardian."

One group suggested the following be added to the topics of discussion "Possible ways that the caregiver-adolescent relationship is exchanged" (i.e., adolescent caring for younger siblings, taking on a job to supplement family income).

Feelings

All data on the topic, "Feelings" suggest it is an issue that is very important to the panelists and their students and is an issue manifested in a variety of ways and settings: in classroom lessons, in tangential response to classroom discussions, in private counselling with students and in conversation among students that occur apart from classroom activities. However, panelists were quick to point out that the effectiveness of presenting this topic will depend on the relationship between teacher and students. Several panelists suggested that if the teacher is uncomfortable with the concept of feelings students are likely to respond accordingly. One panel suggested to counteract this, discussion questions should be depersonalized by phrasing them in the third person -- not "how do you feel" but "how do you think they will feel."

Panelists discussed students problems in expressing feelings. These included depression, dating, peer relationships, and the anger and guilt associated with problems at home (e.g., divorce, abuse, alcoholism). If these situations were to be illustrated in a television program, panelists suggested a number of key issues be visible:

- interactions between feelings and physical health
- acceptable and unacceptable ways to express feelings
- responding to and handling the feelings of others
- accepting and expressing your feelings

They also emphasized that it would be objectionable to present the idea that some feelings are "good" while others are "bad." Panelists suggested the best way to integrate these issues into a story that is appealing to students would be to illustrate a dating situation or a situation where feel-

ings are associated with performance expectations (e.g., school, employment, athletics, etc.).

In discussing the essential outcome statements for the feelings program, two of the five panels believed they were stated "too negatively" and suggested that a more positive approach to feelings be included (e.g., "recognizing and accepting that feelings can have positive consequences" and "recognizing that feelings are not bad or good, they are just feelings"). One panel also recommended outcomes suggesting how students may change as a result of viewing and discussing the program:

- students will be able to recognize and identify feelings
- students will become more accepting of feelings (not judge them)
- students will become more receptive to or aware of other peoples' feelings

Four of the panels made no recommendations concerning these outcomes.

Friendship

Much of the data from panel discussions and the questionnaire suggest the topic "Friendship" is relevant to the needs of adolescent students. Of the 33 questionnaire respondents, 32 indicated the topic is "on the minds" of their students. This perception was also supported by three of the five panels. All groups indicated the topic comes up in classroom lessons, in tangential discussions, in private counselling, and is discussed by students outside of the classroom. In spite of the evidence suggesting the importance of this topic to students, two panels and responses on the questionnaire, indicate many teachers only perceive it as moderately important to somewhat unimportant to students' needs. In discussion, two groups believed it to be less important than girl/boy relationships and suggested it might be passe or seem childish to students. The only apparent explanation of this inconsistency may be evidenced in the response to the question requiring panelists to rank order topics according to how comfortable they would feel presenting them in their classrooms. The median score for the topic of feeling was 3.6 (1 = most comfortable; 6 = least comfortable) suggesting teachers are only moderately comfortable discussing the topic with students. In contrast they ranked their perception of student comfort at 2.3.

Those panels who believe in the importance of the topic, suggested several problem situations they see students confronting in friendship relationships. These observations clustered into three general topics: Friendship and the family, Friendship and peer alliance, and denial by the adolescent of any conflict related to the presence and/or loss of friends. No single theme was dominant among the groups. However, when discussing what teachers would prefer in the friendship program, a majority wanted to see

the dynamics of friendship defined and illustrated. They suggested showing different types of friendships (friendship and family, friendship with the opposite sex), illustrating the limitations of friendship (how far do you go or compromise to preserve a friendship) and defining the general nature of friendship (friends can argue and still be friends). Panelists also suggested that students need to learn how to choose friends and, when necessary, how to get out of a friendship. One group specified that a program on friendship should not deal with dating. Other unacceptable ways of presenting this topic mentioned by one panel included homosexual friendships and the loss of a friend through death. The exclusion of homosexuality did not reflect the personal opinions of the panel, they noted it was not allowed due to school policy.

Aspects of this topic that panels believed students would prefer included:

- parents not liking students' friends
- developing friendships with the opposite sex
- choosing and being a friend
- being in a situation where going along with friends means breaking the law

No suggestion emerged as the single most appropriate approach to the topic.

Three of the five panels questioned the realism of the essential outcomes stated for this topic. There was strong criticism of outcome 3, "The criteria for friendship change as you change." However, the alternative offered by the panels appears to be the same concept stated in a new way, "Your idea of what a friend is may change as your personality develops and changes." One group preferred that outcome 1, "Having friends is important for personal growth" be changed to "Having friends is <u>desirable</u> for personal growth." Again, the alternative appears very similar to the original.

Peer-Group Membership

All discussion and questionnaire data indicate the topic, "Peer-Group Membership" is germane to the needs of the adolescent. Questionnaire data show 31 of 33 reporting that this issue is on the minds of their students and is one they believe students themselves would rate as highly relevant. Forty of forty-two panelists are presently dealing with this issue in the classroom. They report that discussion of this concept occurs with equal frequency in classroom lessons, during incidental response to class discussion, in private counseling with students, and is discussed among students outside of the classroom.

Panels do not anticipate any student unwillingness to discuss this topic. The data instead shows teachers rating their own level of comfort somewhat lower than the rating of their perceptions of student comfort.

A number of situations were noted in discussion that represent the concerns of students about their relationships with peers. Being left out of a group or being used by a group was mentioned as a common concern, as was the general issue of how to avoid conflicts created by peer-group membership (e.g., in reference to stealing, drinking, drug-use and pre-marital sex). Panels believed the problem illustrated on the screen would have to be contemporary. One group suggested a party would attract the attention of students.

Panels noted several key issues they would hope to see represented in the program. Two panels wanted to see the program model the adolescent being assertive, ' "standing up for beliefs even under peer pressure." Other issues included how to cope with peer pressure and rejection, and an illustration of both the advantages and disadvantages of getting involved in a peer group. Several unacceptable ways of presenting the topic were also mentioned. Teachers do not want the program to overemphasize the stressful situations associated with peer-group membership, adding their wish that positive aspects also be illustrated (e.g., study groups, working together on community projects). One group preferred that drug use or abuse not be paramount; however another panel suggested this would be appropriate if the program did not lecture on the subject. One group requested religious and racial topics be avoided. Another wanted to be certain the program would not endorse "nonconformity to societal norms." Two groups also mentioned that students would object to an illustration of extremes (i.e., kids dying because of alcohol or drug abuse).

When discussing the outcome statements for "Peer-Group Membership", two groups expressed uneasiness about the suggestion that as a result of viewing the program, the adolescent will "influence their peer group to respond to their needs." One group believed this to be an unrealistic expectation. The second panel was uneasy as they interpreted it as an invitation for the adolescent to "use" the peer group.

Loving

While the topic of "Loving" comes up in classroom units on VD, Family Life, and Human Sexuality, all 5 discussion groups (N=30) stated they were not dealing with the topic from the viewpoint stated in the objectives. Two of the five groups (one urban, one rural) were undecided as to whether they would be willing to deal with the topic. They mentioned such concerns as: not feeling comfortable with the topic, not knowing how to deal with the topic, and confusion in their own and students' minds as to the relationship of sex and love. Teachers answering the questionnaire rated themselves moderately confortable to somewhat uncomfortable with the topic. There was also concern from three groups that the topic would be unacceptable to their school administration.

The data from questionnaires suggests that this topic is very much on students' minds and comes up in a variety of ways from class lessons to private counsel to peer-group conversation. Teachers believe students would find this topic relevant to their needs; however the teachers themselves do not feel the topic is particularly relevant to students' needs, especially freshmen and sophomores.

When asked whether students would be comfortable in discussing this topic, there was confusion among panel members as to just what aspects of

loving would be presented. They felt the approach taken would determine whether students would be comfortable.

Teachers in discussion groups related a variety of aspects of loving they would like to see presented. These fell into two general areas: 1) Expression of love, including how to deal with the end of a love relationship and negative aspects of a love relationship such as manipulating others for one's own satisfaction, and 2) Different types of love, including love within the family, boy/girl, self, and friendship.

Teachers felt students would want to see both family love and romantic love dealt with in a program on "Loving." They also advised that it would be unacceptable to use primarily a "Love = Sex" or "Love = Romance" approach in the treatment of this topic.

In a discussion of outcomes, panel members believed that the long term outcome of being "clearer about the relationship between physical intimacy and love" should be deleted because it was an unrealistic expectation for adolescents. There was also confusion as to the meaning of the phrase "be more willing to <u>risk</u> expressing love."

In conclusion there was a moderate amount of discomfort about what aspect of loving would be presented and whether teachers would be able to deal with it in the classroom. Although students seem to associate love with romantic relationships, teachers anticipated that both they and their students would prefer an approach that would portray various types of love relationships.

Thinking

In discussion data (4 groups; n=30) there appeared to be some confusion as to what the topic, "Thinking" included. Teachers and other panel members who are already dealing with the concept talked about including it in units on decision-making, problem-solving, intelligence, values-clarification, and brainstorming. Also, both discussion and questionnaire data revealed that the subject came up primarily as a teacher initiated lesson or an incidental response to a lesson.

Panel members perceive no problems in either their willingness to discuss this topic or their comfort or that of their students regarding it.

There seems to be a discrepancy in whether this topic is relevant to students' needs. Questionnaire data revealed that teachers do not perceive it to be relevant to students' needs, nor do they think students would find it relevant to their needs. Also, questionnaire data revealed only 21 of 40 teachers saying that the topic was on students' minds. However, in discussion groups there were many examples provided of "Thinking" situations and problems among this age group. These included primarily 1) decision-making in areas such as career or college vs. a job, peer demands, and inability to anticipate or accept consequences of their decision, and 2) fear of ridicule associated with appearing too "smart" or with showing good thinking skills.

When, in discussion, teachers were asked what aspect of thinking they would want to see presented, the majority of responses also centered on decision-making -- taking responsibility, dealing with its consequences, being aware of the thought process involved, and contrasting impulsive vs. logical decision-making. Other suggestions included relating the thought process to everyday life and stressing its importance in interpersonal relations.

Teachers in discussion groups had two main suggestions concerning the essential outcomes: 1) outcome 1 should be reworded to read "adolescents may have new experiences that may lead to thinking about things differently," and 2) an essential outcome should be added that would read "students will become aware that they do have control over their lives and have alternatives when making decisions."

Suggestions for the desirable discussion topics included a clarification of the term "using thinking or not using thinking." Participants suggested that it read "impulsive vs. logical decision-making to solve a problem." Also, the intent of the desirable behavioral outcome that students "be more thoughtful" was not clear to teachers. They suggested it be deleted or changed to "students will become less impulsive in their thinking."

In conclusion, although students may not perceive "thinking" as being relevant to their needs, teachers perceive that a treatment of this topic would be helpful to this age group, especially if it were to deal with the decision-making/problem-solving aspect of thinking.

Career Aspirations

The topic of "Career Aspirations" is currently being dealt with widely. Of 32 teachers responding to questionnaires 22 stated that career-related topics came up in class as part of a teacher initiated lesson. Three out of five discussion groups made the same statement. The topic was also prevalent in private counselling and as an incidental reaction to class discussion.

Although most teachers perceived no problems in the comfort of either themselves or their students with this topic, there was one discussion group that was undecided about their willingness to deal with it, stating that it seemed to be a weak link in the series and didn't fit with the rest of the topics.

The data collected from both the questionnaires and five discussion groups produced some conflicting comments. While an overwhelming number of teachers (28 of 32) who filled out questionnaires said this topic was on students' minds, these same teachers said they did not think they or their students would find this topic highly relevant to students needs.

Unlike questionnaire data, discussion data revealed that teachers did not perceive this topic to be on students' minds. They felt this was

especially true of the earlier grades, and anticipated problems in students willingness to deal with the topic. They perceived the issues on students' minds relating to this topic were more centered on immediate problems associated with working such as parental expectations, earning potential, job opportunities, and how to budget earnings to fulfill their immediate wants.

Although questionnaire data suggests that this topic is not relevant to students' needs, panel members came up with several suggestions of how they hoped the topic would be presented to best meet their students' needs. Most panel members would want to see information presented on how to choose a career, considering factors which may influence that decision, and learning to build on their present skills. One group felt it was particularly important to help students realize that they always had options, that they didn't have to get locked into a job.

Perhaps the discrepancies in the data could be explained by a difference in interpretation of what a program on "Career Aspirations" could include. Data suggest that students are more interested in immediate job information than they are long-term career planning, while teachers feel it is important to provide a perspective for students that will both be relevant to their present needs and increase their awareness of their options. Two groups mentioned that this topic should not emphasize becoming rich and another panel was against using an open-ended story format for this topic. They also felt students would relate to the topic better if the word "job" was used instead of "career."

Some panel members preferred that the phrase in essential outcome 3 "prepare for a career" be changed to read "prepare for the world of work by developing skills." This would allow a wider interpretation of the outcome to refer to both professional and non-professional jobs. They also suggested outcome 2 read "anxiety may (instead of will) accompany uncertainty about a career direction."

Coping With Stress

Four out of seven discussion groups (N=49) said they are not dealing with the topic of "Stress." Those who are dealing with it indicate it comes up in a variety of ways including teacher-initiated lessons, private counselling, peer conversations, and incidental reactions to class discussions. Questionnaire data (N=38) suggests the topic comes up primarily in private counsel (19) and secondarily through teacher-initiated lessons (14).

Teachers and other panel members 30 of 38 see the topic as being on students' minds and highly relevant to students' needs. They also anticipated that students would consider it relevant to their needs. While teachers rated themselves as being moderately comfortable with the topic they rated students as being somewhat less comfortable in comparison.

Most groups stated they and their students would be willing to deal with the topic; one group expressed concern that teachers may have trouble dealing with it and suggested that in-service may be needed to help teachers learn methods to draw out the students who are actually experiencing stress.

Teachers' perceptions of representative stress situations for this age group fell into 3 categories. The first is home related stress -- divorce, parental pressure to help support the family and raise siblings, and alcoholism in the family. The second is peer and other school-related stress -- dating, interpersonal relationships, fear of rejection, grades and other school work demands, and multiple responsibilities caused by over-commitment. The last is personal-growth related stress -- self-concept, moodiness, and establishing independence.

Aspects of stress that teachers would hope to see on the screen also covered a wide range. In addition to wanting the program to show various

situations such as those listed above, they suggested dealing with stress in terms of prevention, acceptable and unacceptable responses, physical symptoms, and universality. They also wanted some suggestions included on how to deal with stress by setting priorities for activities.

Panel members felt that unacceptable ways of presenting a topic on stress would include portraying only negative consequence of stress (e.g., suicide, or coping with child abuse and pregnancy).

In response to the essential outcomes, panel members suggested that two points be added: 1) In coping with stress a person becomes more aware of their own inner strengths and coping mechanisms, and 2) Coping with stress is a universal problem.

The desirable outcome, "be less stressed by uncertainty," was considered unrealistic by some panel members. They also suggested adding to the desirable long term goals: "students will start developing priorities for their lives," and "students may become more aware of their own physical and emotional responses to stress."

In conclusion, data from both discussions and questionnaires suggest that coping with stress is a highly relevant topic for this age group as evidenced by the wide range of stressful situations students experience. In general, teachers prefer an approach to dealing with stress that will present both the positive and negative aspects of coping with stress, increase students' awareness of their own reaction to stress, and suggest some methods for learning to cope with it.

Conflict Resolution

The topic of "Conflict Resolution" is not only on students' minds according to responses on 37 of 45 questionnaires, but is also being dealt with through teacher-initiated lessons, in private counselling, and as an incidental response to lessons.

Teachers perceived this topic to be moderately relevant to students' needs and anticipated that students would judge it to be moderately important also. Interestingly enough, questionnaire data revealed students would be moderately comfortable (median = 3.5). One discussion panel was unsure of whether students would be willing to discuss their conflicts on other than a one-to-one basis with a teacher or counselor.

While some panel members (4 groups, N=23) stated they would be willing to deal with the topic, one group expressed concern that the topic may not be acceptable to their school administration.

Conflict situations involving this age group fell into four categories: 1) at home, including parents and siblings, 2) with teachers, 3) with peers, 4) at work (job-related), of these, job-related conflicts seemed to be very relevant to many students.

Panel members suggested several aspects of conflict resolution that they felt would be most useful to their students: consequences of repeatedly avoiding conflict, alternatives to win/lose situations, accepting responsibility for their method of resolving conflict, and suggestions on how to approach conflict and when to avoid it.

Teachers anticipated that students would be most receptive to a presentation of interpersonal conflict with peers, a boss at work, a girlfriend or boyfriend, or parents.

Two discussion groups preferred the program not represent violence as an acceptable method of resolving conflict. Teacher-student conflict was also deemed unacceptable. Teachers anticipated that students would have difficulty relating to a program involving parent/child conflict if it were not similar to their own parent conflict situations.

Panel members recommended adding to the desirable outcomes that students will "become aware that they won't always be successful in resolving every conflict."

Aloneness

In group discussion (N=31) the topic of "Aloneness" was judged as germane to the concerns of the adolescent. Of the panelists, 25 indicated it is a topic that comes up in their classes both in planned lessons and as a result of incidental reactions to class discussions.

A majority of the panelists (28) had no reservations about presenting this topic in the classroom. The three remaining panelists did not believe students would discuss the topic and also thought the issue could be incorporated into other topics in lieu of giving it individual coverage. Some members of one group also believed the topic may be considered unacceptable to school administrators in their area, but offered no explanation of this policy.

Panels discussed several issues related to aloneness that are on students' minds. Problems at home, feeling unwanted by peers, being afraid of being alone, feeling lonely in a crowd, and dealing with boredom were all mentioned. When asked what they would prefer to see in the program, responses clustered into two primary themes: illustrating the difference between alone and loneliness, and showing the value of alone time and how it can be used constructively. Panels also mentioned ways of presenting this topic that would be unacceptable. Using a "negative" approach was objectionable to one group. Another group preferred the act of suicide not be illustrated but believed that the issue of suicide was appropriate. Panels were unsure what aspects of the topic students would hope to see.

When responding to the outcome statements for the topic of "Aloneness" one group questioned the desirable outcome: "As a result of viewing this

program the adolescent viewer will spend more time alone." The group agreed this objective was unrealistic and preferred it be removed.

The questionnaire data on "Aloneness" is in direct contrast to the discussion data. While 36 of the 44 respondents indicate this topic is on the minds of their students, they rated it as irrelevant to the needs of their students and also believe students would rate it as unimportant. However, these same respondents also indicated that the subject does come up in their classrooms, frequently in private counselling with students, and nearly as often in classroom lessons and related discussions. A clue to this contradiction may be found in the respondents' rating of their level of comfort related to presenting this topic in the classroom. With the median score of 6 corresponding to "least comfortable" the rating for this topic was 4.7. Respondents also believe students would be uncomfortable with the topic (4.1 with 6 being least comfortable).

Prejudice and Discrimination

The topic of "Prejudice and Discrimination" received mixed responses from panel members. Although 32 of 37 panel members perceive the topic to be on students' minds, data suggest that neither teachers nor students consider this topic relevant to the needs of students. While the topic comes up just as frequently as an incidental response to a lesson as it does in teacher lessons or private counselling , most discussion data suggest that it is almost never concerned with racial issues. Some aspects that are dealt with are sex discrimination, money, and dating. Also, panel members specifically opposed a program dealing with racial issues, stating this aspect was passé and that students need to become aware of the universiality of prejudice and discrimination.

Questionnaire data suggest that teachers would not be comfortable, nor do they think their students would be comfortable with this topic. However, discussion data did not support this finding except in regard to not presenting the racial aspect of the topic.

When asked what aspect of this topic concerned this age group, teachers came up with several areas: male/female (including both societal discrimination and the double standard in family relations) peer-group cliques, sports, discipline, overweight, and job discrimination.

When asked what aspect of this topic they would prefer presented, panel members in general wanted their students exposed to an overall awareness of the phenomenon of prejudice and discrimination: its different forms, where it comes from, how to recognize it, and why people discriminate (e.g., to feel good about themselves). It was also suggested that the

program should deal with personal rather than societal prejudice and stay within areas of students' experience, such as peer-group cliques and job discrimination.

Panel members anticipated that students would prefer to see a program on ways of dealing with career/job discrimination. Aspects of this topic to avoid besides the general racial issue, were interracial dating/marriage, homosexuality, and male/female issues involving contact sports and locker room regulations.

Concerning the essential outcomes, panel members noted that only discrimination (not prejudice) was mentioned. They also suggested adding an outcome stating that everyone experiences some degree of discrimination. Other comments referred primarily to the vagueness of the long term goal statements.

In conclusion, teachers view the topic of prejudice and discrimination as one which could be a potentially irrelevant and uncomfortable topic both to them and their students especially if it were to deal with the traditional racial issue. They prefer a broader approach be taken that would reflect several aspects of prejudice and discrimination in areas relevant to students' experiences.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Panelists were given two opportunities to express concerns they have about the project and to discuss advantages they see in using the series. These questions were posed as a wind-up to panel meetings and also appeared on the take-home questionnaire.

Two of the nine groups were anxious about the possibility of teachers misusing the series or being unable to adequately deal with the sensitive topics. Two panels were also concerned that the series realistically and accurately portray the events in the lives of adolescents as they relate to concepts and issues in the series. Other concerns include: availability of the series and equipment with which to show it, time to schedule it, the problem of keeping it current, the sensitivity of the topics, and the series' effectiveness as a learning tool.

The most frequent response (16 of 77) to the same question on the questionnaire was about the availability of the series. The second greatest concern was that the project be appropriate and relevant for the age group and the school. Respondents were also anxious about the sensitivity and acceptability of the topics to students, parents, administrators, and community, and expressed concern about the quality and appeal of the programs. Six panelists discussed potential problems with fitting the series into their curriculum and finding time to schedule it. Also mentioned by six teachers was a preference that the series avoid moral judgments and present balanced viewpoints.

The panels found more advantages than disadvantages to the series. In discussion, three of nine groups believed the series' greatest asset would be its appeal to students. Its potential to "help get students involved" in these issues was mentioned in two groups. Other advantages

discussed by the panels included its relevancy, its value as a teaching tool, its promotion of visual stimulation, and its usefulness as a catalyst for involvement through discussion and thinking. Some suggested that it may help teachers as well as students deal with these topics.

Similar responses were found on the questionnaire. Using the series to promote student involvement through discussion and thinking was the advantage most frequently listed on the questionnaire. This was followed closely by the project's value as a catalyst students to expressing their feelings and working towards a better understanding of themselves. Equally important to panelists was that the series provides another resource for the subject area. Panelists also noted that students are likely to identify with the series, and that it will be more current than many materials now available. As in discussion, questionnaire responses also noted the value of the series as a tool to help teachers deal with a different subject area.

Overall, the data suggest that panelists found more advantages than disadvantages to using the series. This is clearly evident when considering that the most frequent concern noted by panelists was fear that the series may not be available for their use.

Conclusions

The topics in social and emotional growth to be included in the Secondary Health Project are familiar and important to the health educators and teachers who will be using the series in coming years. While many of these issues are now included in a variety of curriculum areas, the intensity and manner in which they are being covered varies, with some topics distinctly more difficult to teach than others. Panelists seem to welcome the assistance that this series can provide towards developing a more meaningful and consistant approach to these topics. Thus, the series is perceived as an important tool for engaging teachers and students in discussions of these salient issues.

There are many ways that these personal and social growth issues are presently dealt with. Some are incorporated in a formal curriculum, others are more frequently engaged in during a one-to-one teacher-student contact; still others often arise informally in classroom discussion. The approaches vary with the topics and the teachers.

Each of the program topics was discussed by teachers who supplied their suggestions, comments and insights. These will be useful in completing the project design and in continuing to refine objectives. In addition, the data may be useful in focusing the scripts on relevant and important issues that teachers feel will be engaging for them and their students. The data reported here will also be helpful to those writing the group leader's materials and preparing for utilization activities.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I.

ANALYSIS OF TOPIC RELEVANCY AND COMFORT

Figure 1

Median Level of Comfort as Perceived by Teachers

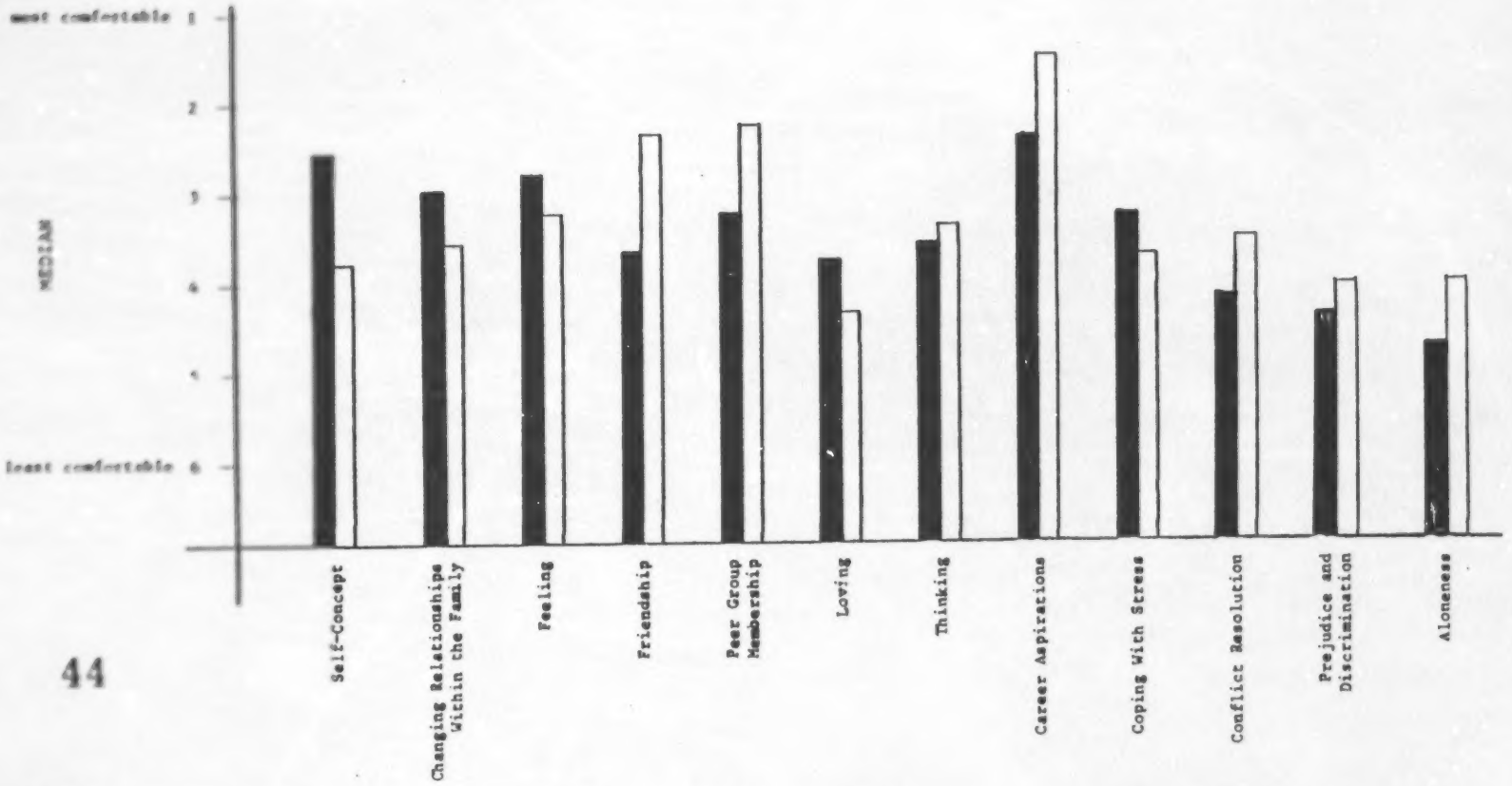
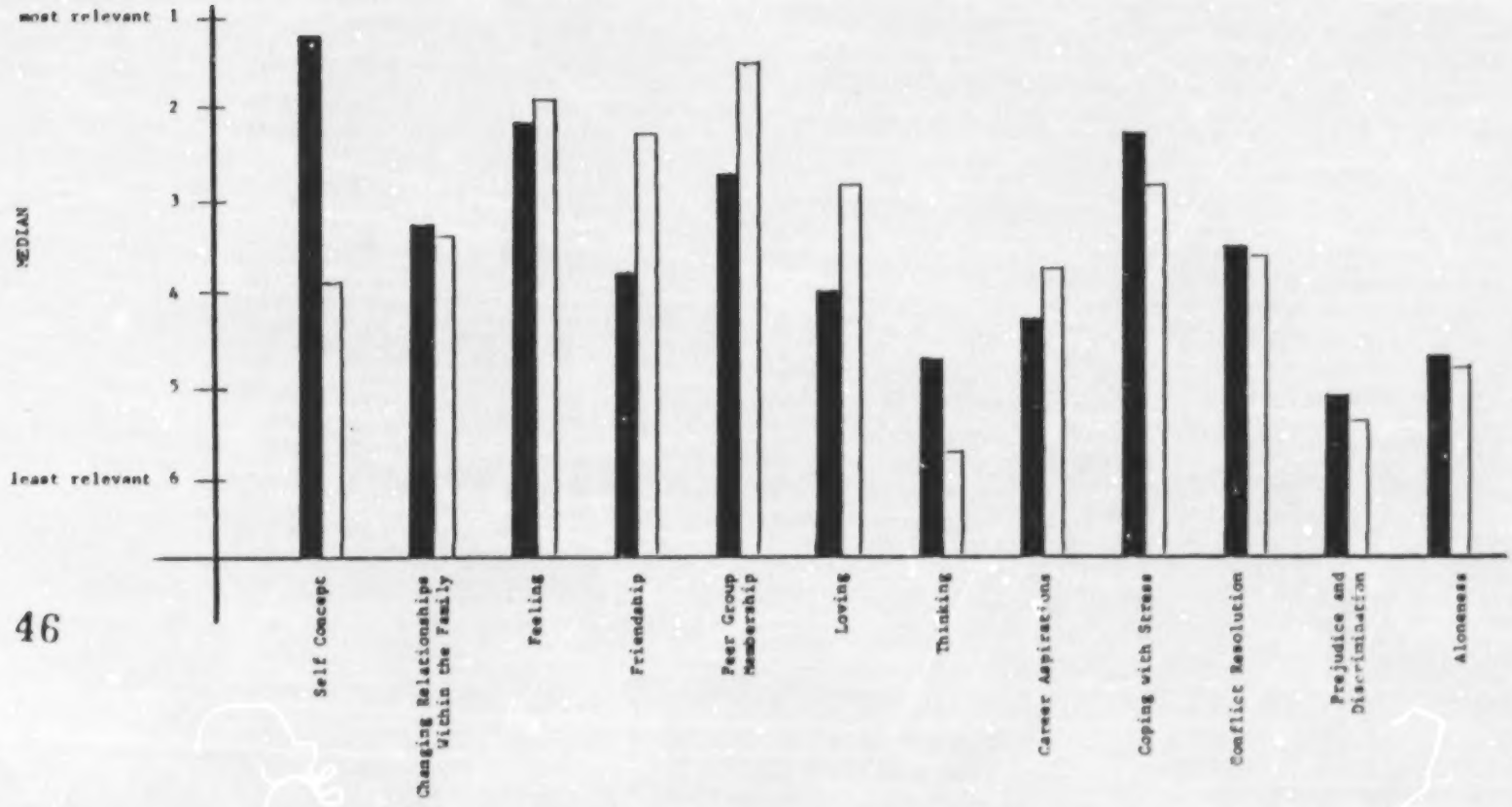


Figure 2

Median Levels of Relevance as Perceived by Teachers



APPENDIX II.

EVALUATION MATERIALS

N= ___ Topic _____

Discussion Questions

1. Are you already dealing with this topic with your students?

__ yes __ no

If yes, how is this topic most likely to come up?

PROBES:

__ in class as part of a teacher initiated lesson
__ an incidental reaction to a class discussion
__ as an immediate concern expressed privately by a student to a teacher
__ students talk about it among themselves but not in classroom discussion
__ other

2. If not, would you be willing to deal with this topic if it were presented in a program?

__ yes

__ no

__ undecided

PROBE: What reservations do you have?

Would this topic be acceptable to the school administration for this area?

__ yes

__ no

__ don't know

3. Do you think students would be willing to discuss this topic in the classroom?

   PROBE: Do you anticipate any problems?

4. (Content) What is on students minds concerning this topic?

PROBE: Concerning this topic, what kinds of situations or problems are representative of this age group?

5. Do you think there is a difference between how students and teachers would want this topic presented in a program? For example: If I were to come into your room and announce I were going to show a program on _____,

   . what aspect of that topic would you hope to see on the screen?

   . what aspect of that topic do you think students would hope to see on the screen?

6. Are there ways of presenting this topic that are unacceptable:

to teachers -

to students -

7. Are the <u>essential</u> outcomes noted for this program realistic?
Are the <u>desirable</u> outcomes realistic?

Please explain:

Essential	Desirable
yes__ no__	yes__ no__

If not, what changes would make the outcomes more realistic?

Essential	Desirable

Questionnaire

General Directions: Carefully read and evaluate the attached sheets that outline the remaining six topics and their outcomes. Then answer the following questions:

1. Using the corresponding columns below, rank order the topics listed for each of the following questions, (ie., respond to question A in Column A).

   A. How comfortable would you be with these topics if they were presented as a program in your classroom?

   Rank topics in order of preference from 1 to 6: 1 = most comfortable
   6 = least comfortable

   B. How comfortable would students be with these topics if they were presented as a program in your classroom?

   Rank topics in order of preference from 1 to 6: 1 = most comfortable
   6 = least comfortable

   C. As a teacher, which topics do you perceive as being most relevant to student needs?

   Rank topics in order of preference from 1 to 6: 1 = most relevant
   6 = least relevant

   D. Which topics would students perceive as being most relevant to their needs?

   Rank topics in order of preference from 1 to 6: 1 = most relevant
   6 = least relevant

	A Teacher Comfort	B Student Comfort	C Teacher's Perceptions of Student Needs	D Students' Perceptions of Their Needs
Loving				
Self Concept				
Conflict Resolution				
Aloneness				
Feelings				
Prejudice and Discrimination				

turn page

2. For each topic listed in column I on the grid below, please respond to the following question: Given this topic, is it something that is on the minds of your students? Check (✓) your response for each topic in the corresponding space listed under column II.

   If your response to this question is yes, using the options listed below, indicate in column III ("comes up") how interest in the topic is most likely to be expressed. List all the options that are applicable.

   A = in class, as part of a teacher initiated lesson

   B = as an incidental reaction to a class discussion

   C = as an immediate concern expressed privately by a student(s) to the teacher/counselor

   D = students talk about it among themselves but not in classroom discussion

   E = other (please specify in the provided space)

I	II		III
TOPICS	ON STUDENTS MINDS		COMES UP
Loving	__yes	__no	
Self Concept	__yes	__no	
Conflict Resolution	__yes	__no	
Aloneness	__yes	__no	
Feelings	__yes	__no	
Prejudice and Discrimination	__yes	__no	

3. Having had an opportunity to review all twelve topics, please complete the following sentences:

   The greatest concern I have about using this series is...

   _____

   _____

   The greatest advantage I see about using this series is...

   _____

   _____

4. What aids would be most helpful to have included in the discussion leader's guide that will be distributed to teachers using this series.

Rank those five that are most important from the following list:

1 = most preferred
5 = least preferred

__ objectives
__ activities
__ discussion questions
__ program synopsis
__ teacher resources
__ student resources
__ content outline
__ evaluation materials
__ other (specify) _____

5. What resources are you currently using to teach personal and social growth topics? Where applicable, check and give at least one title in the blank provided:

__ film _____
__ film strip _____
__ audio cassette _____
__ video cassette _____
__ records _____
__ books _____
__ other _____

6. Please complete the following sentence:

If I were writing the discussion leader's guide, the thing that would be most useful to include would be

_____
_____
_____

7. Is instructional television (ITV) available for your classroom use?

__ yes __ no

I have used ITV
__ in the past week
__ in the past month
__ in the past year
__ have used ITV but not in the past year
__ have never used ITV

8. What problems do you perceive with using instructional television with this age group?

_____
_____

turn page

What advantages do you see in using instructional television with this age group?

_____

_____

9. Do you use instructional materials obtained from community resources to aid in presenting personal and social growth issues?

__ yes __ no

10. If yes, which community organizations provide instructional materials on personal and social growth?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank You

Honorarium and Background Information

Name _____

School Name _____

School Address _____

_____

City State/Province Zip

Social Security # _____

Are you presently teaching? __ yes __no

How many years have you taught?
__ less than 1 year
__ 1-2 years
__ 3-5 years
__ 6-10 years
__ 11-12 years
__ more than 20 years

What grade(s) do you teach? (check all that apply) __ 9th __ 10th __ 11th __ 12th

What is your major teaching assignment?

__ Health and/or Physical Education
__ Home Economics
__ Language Arts/English/Literature
__ Psychology/Sociology
__ Social Studies
__ Other (please specify) _____

If you are not presently teaching, what is your present occupation? ____

_____

How long have you been working in this area?

__ less than 1 year
__ 1-2 years
__ 3-5 years
__ 6-10 years
__ 11-20 years
__ more than 20 years

Which of the following best describes the location of your school?

__ large city (250,000 +)
__ suburban
__ town or small city not near large city
__ rural or farm